

RETURN

(79)

To an ADDRESS of the HOUSE OF COMMONS, dated 14th April, 1886;—For a copy of the memorial of the North-West Council, presented to the Government by Messrs. Wilson and Ross, members of said Council, and of any answer made to said memorial, and of any correspondence between the Government and the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories or other parties in reference thereto.

By Command.

J. A. CHAPLEAU,

Secretary of State.

Department of the Secretary of State,
19th April, 1886.

LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S OFFICE, REGINA, 31st December, 1885.

SIR,—I have the honor to enclose you herewith copies of a number of resolutions passed by the Council of the North-West Territories, sitting in Legislative Session on the 15th December, 1885.

I would request that you will please submit the same at an early date for the consideration of the Government.

I have, &c.,

E. DEWDNEY, *Lieutenant-Governor.*

Hon. Secretary of State, Ottawa.

RESOLUTIONS passed by the Council of the North-West Territories on 15th December, 1885.
To His Honor the Lieutenant-Governor in Council:

Your Committee appointed to memorialize the Dominion Government on certain matters, beg leave to report:—

That the wishes and representations of the Council would, in the opinion of your Committee, be brought more directly to the notice of the several heads of the Government departments by resolutions of the council separate on each subject, instead of by memorial as was formerly done.

And recommend that the following resolutions be passed by the Council, and forwarded by the Lieutenant-Governor to the Government at Ottawa.

All of which is respectfully submitted.

T. W. JACKSON, *Chairman.*

1. That power should be given to the North-West Council to incorporate companies having purely territorial objects.

2. That all old established trails should be at once surveyed by the Government and afterwards vested in the North-West Council.

3. That this Council is informed that there are yet many old settlers' claims unsettled, principally in the Prince Albert and Edmonton districts, and urgently recommend that immediate steps be taken to determine such matters, and that in the

settlement of claims the possessory rights of squatters to land, as regards extent of claims, as recognised by the custom of the country prior to the passing of the Dominion Lands Act of 1879, and the right to transfer such claims should be recognized.

4. That notwithstanding the repeated assertions to the contrary, the freight rates imposed by the Canadian Pacific Railway are yet found to be a severe tax on the products of the North-West. This Council therefore respectfully suggests that the influence of the Government should be used to induce the Canadian Pacific Railway Company to reduce their rates so as to compare favorably with rates in the provinces of the Dominion, who have the advantage of railway competition, also that exceptionally favorable rates should be given on lumber coming into the Territories from British Columbia.

5. That no charge be made for any wood used for fuel purposes by *bond fide* settlers, and not cut for sale; and that each homestead be allowed 4,000 lineal feet of building timber on free permit.

6. That the improvement heretofore suggested by the North-West Council of the navigation of the North Saskatchewan river should receive the further and favorable consideration of the Government, in order that the settlements of the northern parts of this country, far removed from the benefits of the Canadian Pacific Railway, might advantage by the natural highway, as an outlet for the products of that portion of the country.

7. That the rights of *habeas corpus* be granted to the North-West Territories.

8. That all lands cancelled for any cause should be thrown open for free homesteading on ordinary homestead conditions, and not held for purposes of sale.

9. That owing to the great expense now attending appeals to the Court of Queen's Bench of Manitoba, and the rapid settlement of the country and increase of litigation in the Territories, this Council recommends the establishment of a Territorial Court of Appeal for the North-West Territories.

10. That this Council recommends to the favorable consideration of the Government a certain petition, a copy of which is hereto annexed—adopted at a public meeting at Edmonton, 30th June, 1884, asking that a trail be constructed from that point into the Peace River country.

To the Lieutenant Governor of the North-West Territories in Council :

The petition of the undersigned residents of the electoral district of Edmonton,

HUMBLY SHOWETH :—

1. The population of the said district already exceeds five thousand, of whom nearly the entire number is composed of farmers, and others engaged in agricultural pursuits and stock raising.

2. That the said farmers are now raising a surplus of grain and other agricultural produce, and are also now raising a surplus of cattle and other stock over and above the requirements both of themselves and of the said district at large; that owing to the following facts, viz.:

(a.) That there is no line of railway nearer them than 200 miles.

(b.) That the only means of transportation to said railway is by carts.

(c.) That the freight rates by such means are enormous, and only less excessive by said railway to the east, the said farmers and agriculturists are precluded from shipping their said surplus stock and produce to the eastern markets, which being at present the only ones available to them under any (even the above detailed) circumstances, they are practically without any market whatever for such surplus, and the same consequently remains on their hands, not merely as production, but also a source of direct loss to them, and as a further consequence of the facts above set forth, they find it difficult, if not impossible, either to obtain credit from or to pay their debts to the merchants and the tradesmen of the said district or elsewhere, and therefore the means of gaining more than a mere livelihood, and certainly the means of improving their condition, are at present totally unavailable to them.

3. That on the other hand, your petitioners' natural market lies in the country to the north and north-west of the said district, where there is a population of twenty thousand Indians about the water system tributary to the Mackenzie River, but the said natural market is at present inaccessible to your petitioners; that the said Indians trade chiefly with parties bringing their goods from Great Britain, whereas if proper communication were opened up and traders could get access to the market last aforesaid, goods manufactured in Canada would be purchased and used by the said Indians, and large quantities of flour, provisions and produce (of which they are now deprived) would be shipped to them, and a valuable trade would be established with them to the advantage not only of your petitioners, but also of the inhabitants of other districts in the Territories and of the eastern provinces of Canada.

4. That the said natural market has as its centre the point of confluence of the Smoky River with the Peace River in Athabasca District, and after the said point has been reached only three short portages occur till the Arctic Ocean is reached, so that the vast country between such point and the said ocean would thus also be thrown open to your petitioners, and the inhabitants of the said other districts and eastern provinces, but it is impossible to take advantage of the said market, inasmuch as the present means of access thereto are by a mixed land and water route, whereas the said market can be tapped advantageously and profitably only by constructing a waggon and cart road thereto.

5. That there are three routes practicable from Edmonton to said market, and they may be described as follows:—

(a.) The old Hudson Bay route *via* Fort Assiniboine. Of this the worst parts are between the Athabasca and Pembina Rivers, and for the last forty miles before reaching Little Silver Lake. This, however, is the shortest route, and is recommended by your petitioners as being on the whole the best.

(b.) The route from Edmonton *via* Lake St. Anne to the mouth of the McLeod River, thence up the Big Hawk River and on in a north-west direction to the mouth of Smoky River. This route is almost entirely through small timber from Lac St. Anne to the mouth of Smoky River, but it is nevertheless believed that a fair road can be secured this way.

(c.) The route from Edmonton to the Athabasca Landing, thence following the Athabasca River to its northern bend, between the 55th and 56th parallels of latitude, thence in a direction slightly north of west to the Raspberry Mountains, where an old pack trail is used, thence along the said trail to Slave Lake Post, at the west end of Little Slave Lake, thence by the Hudson Bay cut route to the confluence of the Smoky and Peace Rivers. The distance between the Landing and Slave Lake Post is about one hundred and sixty miles, and the country traversed by this route is of a rolling and sandy character, with a scattered growth of small poplar and pitch pine ridges. Only one muskeg has to be crossed, and it is believed that by building three miles of corduroy this route, as regards said muskeg, would be made practicable. This is the longest of the said three available routes.

6. That the easy access to the said natural market, and the said country between the same and the said ocean, which would be given by the construction of one of the three above described routes would result, not only in improving your petitioners' condition, but also in materially developing the agricultural, mineral and other resources of a tract of country containing seven hundred and fifty thousand square miles; and, moreover, the Dominion Government would thereby derive great benefit in the prosecution of their surveys and explorations, and in the reduction of freights and other expenses in connection with such surveys and explorations, and in connection with their treaties with and government of the Indians in the country under consideration.

Wherefore your petitioners humbly pray:

1. That your honorable body will taken into immediate and earnest consideration the facts hereintofore set forth.

2. That you will select and adopt one of the said three routes, and cause the same to be so improved and such work to be done upon it as to make it a practicable road for the purposes aforesaid.

3. And that, if necessary, you will memorialize the Dominion Government and Parliament to assist in promoting the prayer of this petition and in furthering the objects thereof, as being a fact of more than local importance.

And your petitioners will ever pray.

Dated at Edmonton, in Alberta Territory, this 30th day of June, 1884.

11. This council respectfully submits that it is in the interests of Canada, as a whole, as well as the North-West Territories, that the people of the Territories should be represented in the Senate and House of Commons of Canada; and in the sub-division of the country for representative purposes, that reference should be had as well to territorial area as to population.

12. That the Torrens system, introduced into Parliament last Session, should be made applicable to the North-West Territories at once; and so soon as the system becomes law all titles to land should come under its operations, so as to avoid two systems of registration being in operation at the same time.

13. That settlers who have entered for a homestead and pre-emption, and who are now, or may hereafter be entitled to a patent for their homestead quarter section, be allowed to enter their pre-emption as a second homestead on condition of an additional three years' homestead duties on their former homestead quarter section, and cultivation duties on present pre-emption or homestead as circumstances will permit.

14. That all settlers who have been in any way engaged in the service of the Government or in the transport service during and in connection with the late rebellion, be allowed the time so engaged to count as actual residence on their homestead.

15. That the Dominion Government should encourage the building of branch lines of railways, particularly those running north and south through the Territories; such lines would not only enable those settlements now far removed from the Canadian Pacific Railway to reap the advantages hoped to be derived from the completion of that national work, but would as well open for settlement some of the finest areas of land in the Territories. That such encouragement, if at all practicable, should be by cash subsidy, or guarantee by the Government of the bonds of companies constructing such lines, thus preserving the public lands for purposes of settlement.

16. That the benefits derived from the National Policy to the older provinces of the Dominion do not apply to the North-West Territories as regards agricultural implements and lumber; and it being necessary to the future development of the country that every encouragement should be extended to the agricultural interests of the North-West, this council recommends that a rebate should be given equal to the duty now imposed on agricultural implements and lumber.

17. That the fact of the odd-numbered sections of land being principally held by companies and individuals for speculation purposes, and in most instances such lands, particularly in the Canadian Pacific Railway belt, being exempt from taxation, is a bar to settlement and progress. This council recommends that immediate steps should be taken by the Dominion Government towards acquiring the odd-numbered sections and opening them for homesteading purposes.

18. That moneys voted by Parliament for expenses of Government in the North-West Territories, including printing, roads, bridges, ferries, aid to schools, etc., should be vested in the North-West Council as representatives of the people.

19. That it is of the utmost importance to the North-West Territories that the Hudson Bay Railway may be constructed as rapidly as possible, if the scheme is found practicable.

That the success of the North-West very largely depends on the agricultural industries of the country, and the cost of transport now, and as must be, we fear, in the future, is a very severe tax on the industries of the North-West in consequence of its great distance from European markets. This Council is of opinion that the most liberal encouragement should be extended to the scheme by the Government of Canada.

20. That notwithstanding the settlement of a very large number of claims amongst the half-breeds, and the very satisfactory manner in which the commissioners appointed for that purpose performed their work, so far as the time occupied by them would permit, there yet remains a very large number of half-breeds who are entitled to a recognition of their claims, we cannot impress too strongly upon the Dominion Government the desirability of settling all half-breed claims without delay, and would strongly urge the immediate appointment of a commission to continue the work until thoroughly completed.

21. That claims for compensation from the Government for loss sustained during the late rebellion should, in the opinion of this council, be promptly settled by the Government, it being within our knowledge that great inconvenience and hardship is now being undergone by some, who have lost heavily in consequence of the outbreak.

This council would recommend in this connection that most searching and rigorous enquiry be had as to the nature of claims, so that any who were a party to their own loss may not receive the same consideration as those who were loyal to the Government.

Also that goods and supplies furnished to troops in good faith by settlers and merchants should be paid for.

22. That where stock is kept by a homesteader some rule should be adopted and made a part of the land regulations, so that the stock of homesteaders over a fixed number might be allowed to count as cultivation duties, in whole or in part; and that encouragement should be given to tree-planting in prairie sections of the country, and to count also as cultivation duties.

23. That the council respectfully intimates that, in their opinion, it would be most satisfactory to the people of these Territories were the Government in future to fill appointments to positions of trust and emolument from amongst the residents of these Territories.

24. That owing to the unexpectedly rapid development of the agricultural resources of the territories, and to the erection of gristing mills at several points, as well as the extent of the cattle interests of the North-West, this council recommends both in the interests of the Government and the settler, that in the future all food supplies, both for the North-West Mounted Police and for the Indians, should be purchased in the Territories.

We were aware that the issue of beef to Indians instead of the American pork would be more satisfactory to all the tribes. We would suggest that contracts be called for in smaller quantities, the security deposit not to exceed 5 per cent., and without official routine which has attended the letting of contracts heretofore.

In this manner, we believe the settler will be helped, and the Government will receive a cheaper and a better article.

25. That the position of several town sites in the Territories, in which the Crown is interested, proves from year to year more unsatisfactory owing to the impossibility of collecting taxes from unsold lots therein, which are increased in value owing to the expenditure of taxes paid by the residents of such towns, the Crown thereby being benefitted without sharing any of the burdens of taxation.

And as great difficulties are met with in establishing and sustaining schools and municipal organizations in such town sites, in the opinion of the Council, it is advisable that the Government should at once dispose of their interests in such town sites so that the same may be made available for taxation.

26. Whereas representations have been made to this Council by the elected members of Prince Albert, St. Albert and Edmonton, that certain colonization companies in and near their electoral districts, viz.: The Prince Albert Colonization Company, and the Edmonton and Saskatchewan Land and Colonization Company have not complied with their agreements, the effect of which is that large blocks of land are locked up from settlement, and the progress of these districts materially retarded.

Therefore, this Council requests that immediate steps be taken to have those companies inspected, and if it is found that such representations are correct, to insist upon such companies carrying out their agreements entered into with the Government, or the cancellation of their grants.

27. That this council has learned with satisfaction that it is the intention of the Government to distribute medals to the volunteers who were engaged in suppressing the late rebellion. We would beg to recommend that a like recognition of the valuable services rendered by the North-West mounted, and the Prince Albert and Battleford special forces should be made. We believe that on every occasion, where the forces had an opportunity, they showed themselves of that material of which Canada is justly proud. Also that services rendered by many loyal half-breeds during the outbreak should be recognized by the Government.